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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION PRESIDENT OBAMA

¶1. The major locally-generated media reaction to President Obama's speech in Cairo is the following Editorial in the San Pedro Sula-based liberal newspaper, Tiempo by Billy Pena. San Pedro Sula has the largest population of people who trace their family roots to the Middle East.

Begin text:

"Historical speech."

Op-ed by Billy Pena in the San Pedro Sula-based liberal newspaper Tiempo (06-08-09): "U.S. President's speech in Cairo, directed to Muslims of the world, has passed to history. Barack Obama has been the only U.S. President who has given such an eloquent and impacting speech to Muslims. He has extended a hand to Islam by choosing his words carefully... he never pronounced the word 'terrorist' because he knew it would be offensive. He referred to Al Qaeda's members as 'extremists.' He identified with them sincerely by saying, even though Christian, he lived in Indonesia and he had Muslim relatives. In the U.S, his speech was highly criticized by conservatives and Republicans that did not understand that the message was directed to Muslim world in Egypt. He understands that his speech would be heard analyzed worldwide that is why he chose every word carefully. We must understand that the message was directed to Muslims, which understood the message better than the U.S. people. That is where Obama's greatness lies... he understands completely human nature and cultures and traditions from all the people. I repeat again, never has a U.S. President given such an impacting, singular and extraordinary speech. The Israeli government manifested its desire that Obama's speech will begin a new reconciliation era between the Arab and Muslim world with Israel. Mahmoud Abbas' spokesperson said that the speech showed that a new and different policy exists in the Palestine conflict. An Iraqi spokesperson considered it to be important and historic because it reflects the positive Washington government's direction. Eric Goldstein from Human Rights Watch considers that Obama could have been more specific by mentioning the state of emergency in Egypt and other countries. We don't agree. He would have committed a huge mistake by mentioning the state of emergency and political dissidents arrest in Egypt. Obama knows when and where to pronounce his historical words. He was criticized by extending his hand to Iran. A Fox News reporter said that he had recognized the group that asks for the destruction of Israel. The journalists did not understand that Obama wants the U.S. to have a relationship with all the countries but the U.S. will always fight against the groups that threaten national security of his country and allies. Obama asked Hamas to join in the future to Palestine people. He was severely criticized in the U.S. for that suggestion and clearly democratic and peaceful aperture. Israel was not fully satisfied with his speech, especially when he suggested the creation of a Palestine State that could coexist in peace with Israel. However in his visit to the concentration camp in Weimar, Germany, he said that the U.S. and Israel were joined by indissoluble bonds. He visited

the camp in company of Angela Merkel, Elie Wiesel - whose father died in the camp - and Bertrand Hertz, who along Wiesel survived the horrors in the camp. Obama has passed into history visibly moved."

End text.

Comment: The editorial shows apt appreciation for the President's timing, tactfulness and forthrightness in offering a new beginning to the Muslim world. Until the words become concrete through action, the speech, according to this analyst, represents a good place to start.

Llorens